

# CHRISTIANITY in the PHILIPPINES

A report on the only  
Christian Nation in the Orient

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The Philippine Islands lie in the Oriental "Far East" about ten thousand miles west of the United States. There are 7,083 islands in the Philippines archipelago; about one tenth of these are habitable and arable. Place the archipelago on the map of the United States, and it would stretch north and south from Chicago to New Orleans, east and west from Kansas City to Cleveland. Move them into their own latitude, but keep them in the western hemisphere for the moment, and we see that the Philippines occupy the tropical zone which roughly corresponds to Central America below Mexico, and to the first four hundred miles of northern South America. The northern tip of Luzon, the farthest north of the principal islands, is still 550 miles farther south than Miami, Florida.

The Philippines are part of the Orient, farther from America than Japan and as far from our shores as the eastern coast of China. By passenger plane, Manila is scarcely more than three hours from Hong Kong or Saigon; Formosa, lying due north, is even closer.

## WORLD CONTACTS

Politically, the Philippines have passed through three main episodes in their contact with the outside world: (1) with Arabia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, (2) with Spain in the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, and (3) with the United States of America in the twentieth century.

Each of these episodes has left deep religious marks upon the Filipino people. The Arabs brought the religion of Islam; today there are more than half a million *Moros* (Filipino Moslems) in the southern Islands. The Spaniards brought their own variety of Roman Catholicism, the churches of which now hold the nominal allegiance of at least fifteen million Filipinos. The Americans introduced Protestantism, which has made amazing strides in half a century to number more than 600,000 adherents.

These influences were laid upon others reaching back into a dim, unrecorded past. The native animism of the aboriginal tribes survives to this day in mountain areas. Traces of Hinduism, brought

by early mass migrations of the Malayan peoples who came to constitute the majority of the population, barely persist. Sanscrit words live on in the Filipino dialects, though the alphabet that once housed them perished long since under the weight of Spanish culture, and elements of Hindu cultus intermingle in unique ways with animism, Mohammedanism, and Roman Catholicism. Religiously, the Filipino today is part of all he has met.

Filipino Moslems, or *Moros* as they are called, are fairly well localized in Mindanao and the southern islands of the Sulu Sea. They are the result of the conquering, missionary zeal of Abu Bakr, an Arab who claimed direct descent from Mohammed. He invaded the region about six hundred years ago, married a Sulu Island princess, ruled as Sultan, made piracy a religious duty, and gave a fighting Islamic stamp to the life of the people.<sup>1</sup> Though they conducted many campaigns against them, the Spaniards never really conquered the Moros. The Americans were more successful; Governor General Leonard Wood studied their culture, came to know their Koran better than most of them, moved peacefully among them, and instituted many programs of public works for their social betterment. But to this day Moros remain aloof; they feel and act like marginal peoples. Racially they are Filipinos; religiously they are at odds with their fellows. Their long centuries of piracy and active hostility toward their fellow-countrymen bequeath to them a heritage of suspicion and resentment which the present Philippine Republic is overcoming but slowly.

The Spaniards were in the Philippines for nearly four hundred years, from 1521 to 1898. Their cultural influence is vitally persistent and widely prevalent to this day. Filipino names are really Spanish; just as American Negro names are Anglo-Saxon, not African; a telephone directory of Manila reads much as one in Mexico City, or Buenos Aires, or Madrid. Filipino dialects are written and pronounced with the phonetic values of the Spanish alphabet. Spanish blood flows in Filipino veins—in fact, *Filipino* is the Spanish name for a native child by a Spanish father; the natives themselves were contemptuously called *Indians*. (Half a million Filipinos or more still speak the Spanish tongue, though

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1. Basil Mathews, *The Unfolding Drama in Southeast Asia* (New York: Friendship, 1944), p. 88.

Spanish political control ended in the day of their grandfathers.) Spaniards also gave the Philippines their name—in honor of King Philip II—the fiesta system, the national sport of cock-fighting, and the Roman Catholic Church.

The agent of the crown who claimed the Philippines for Spain was none other than the Portuguese explorer, Magellan. He first came upon the islands in March 1521. The next month he was dead, killed in battle against hostile natives. He lies buried on Cebu Island. His expedition completed its circuit of the globe without him.

The first Spanish settlement did not take root until 1565 when Gen. Miguel Lopez de Legaspi landed with a party which included five Augustinian friars. He took Manila in 1571 and made it the capital of the new colony. The colonial government followed the feudal pattern. Several of the provisional governors were churchmen; thus the direct union of church and state came to focus in the same official. But even where it did not so focus it was none the less effectual, with the church in a leading position as feudal landlord and political dictator, as well as spiritual mentor.

The Spanish rule here as elsewhere was predatory and corrupt. St. Francis Xavier charged, "They conjugate the verb 'to rob' in every mood."<sup>2</sup> The friars, at first genuinely interested in helping the people, gradually degenerated with the acquisition of wealth and the taste of power.

Such singular and disastrous wedding of religion to military and political powers was foreshadowed as early as Easter 1521 when Magellan landed on the Island of Limasawa. The party included a priest. A place on shore having been prepared, the mass was said for the first time on the new soil, to the accompaniment of guns. A member of the party reported: "The ships fired all their artillery at once when the body of Christ was elevated, the signal having been given from the shore with muskets."<sup>3</sup>

In the beginning the friars meant well. They came in the sacrificial spirit of true missionaries. Only later, in succeeding generations, were they corrupted. Large groups of missionaries began to arrive almost at once after the founding of the colony by Legaspi.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

3. Osias and Lorenzana, *Evangelical Christianity in the Philippines* (Dayton: United Brethren Publishing House, 1931), p. 28.

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2. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

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lution it advocated. The moving spirit of *Katipunan* was Andres Bonifacio, student of the French Revolution. From 100,000 to 400,000 Tagalogs joined him in secret compact to overthrow the Spanish regime.<sup>7</sup>

Jose Rizal, brilliant physician, linguist, scientist, poet, and novelist who crowded the work of six men into a brief lifetime, wielded his pen like a sword in the cause of reform. Not himself a revolutionist, but a fearless reformist, he was nevertheless branded and executed as such. Today the name of Jose Rizal, patriot and martyr, is the one name dearest to all Filipino hearts. His arrest, farcical trial and execution on December 30, 1896, added new fuel to the revolution—which had broken out four months earlier. Rizal's books, especially *The Reign of Greed (El Filibusterismo)* and *The Social Cancer (Noli Me Tangere)*, speak more eloquently than any scientific treatise of the grievances of the Filipino people against their Spanish masters. Let Rizal speak. Of his purpose in *Noli Me Tangere*, he wrote:

I have written of the social conditions and the life, of our beliefs, our hopes, our longings, our complaints, and our sorrows; I have unmasked the hypocrisy which, under the cloak of religion, has come among us to impoverish and to brutalize us; I have distinguished the true religion from the false, from the superstition that traffics with the holy word to get money and to make us believe in absurdities for which Catholicism would blush, if ever it knew of them.<sup>8</sup>

That the Roman church in the Philippines had begun nobly Rizal knew. He honored that beginning and the faith of the church insofar as it was Christian:

I realize that a true faith and a sincere love for humanity guided the first missionaries to our shores; I realize the debt of gratitude we owe to those noble hearts. . . . But because the forefathers were virtuous, should we consent to the abuses of their degenerate descendants? . . . The country does not ask for their expulsion but only for reforms required by the changed circumstances and new needs.<sup>9</sup>

7. "The Philippine Islands," *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1949), 17:725-32.

8. Jose Rizal, *The Social Cancer*, translated by Charles E. Derbyshire (2d. ed; Manila: Philippine Education Co., 1926), pp. xxxi, xxxii.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 383.

More specifically, Rizal exposed the rule of the friars and their wealthy religious orders over the civil administrators:

"You don't seem to realize what country you are in," he has the gobernadorcillo in the *Social Cancer* say to Don Filipino, an impatient reformer. "The friars are rich and united, while we are divided and poor. . . . Happen what will, the friars are always right."<sup>10</sup>

At another point in the story, the Sage becomes Rizal's spokesman on this same theme, the all-embracing rule of the rich friars:

. . . the government sees nothing, hears nothing, nor does it decide anything, except what the curate or the Provincial causes it to see, hear, and decide. The government is convinced that it depends for its salvation wholly on them, that it is sustained because they uphold it. . . . The government has no dream of a healthy future; it is the arm, while the head is the convento.<sup>11</sup>

Rizal agreed with Francis Xavier; the Spaniard studied how to conjugate the verb "to rob" in every mood. The system itself was hostile to justice: "Let us not ask for miracles," he writes in irony,

let us not ask that he who comes as an outsider to make his fortune and go away afterwards should interest himself in the welfare of the country. What matters to him the gratitude or the curses of a people whom he does not know, in a country where he has no associations, where he has no affections?<sup>12</sup>

Rizal's cry for justice rings in these questions:

And thou, Religion preached for suffering humanity, hast thou forgotten thy mission of consoling the oppressed in their misery and of humiliating the powerful in their pride? Hast thou now promises only for the rich, for those who can pay thee?<sup>13</sup>

"You say she [Spain] snatched us from error and gave us the true faith," says the rebel Elias to young Ibarra in *The Social Cancer*;

do you call faith these outward forms, do you call religion this traffic in girdles and scapularies, truth these miracles and wonderful tales that we hear daily? Is this the law of Jesus Christ? For this it was hardly necessary that a God should allow Him-

10. *Ibid.*, p. 275.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 195.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 196.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

self to be crucified or that we should be obliged to show eternal gratitude. Superstition existed long before—it was only necessary to systematize it and raise the price of its merchandise!<sup>14</sup>

The above quotations from Rizal, dated 1886, show something of the grievances of the Filipino people against the Spanish regime of church and state; they also show some of the passionate feeling which made revolution all but inevitable. Abuses needing redress may be quickly catalogued:<sup>15</sup>

1. Feudal landlordism of rich religious orders bought at the cost of grinding poverty to the poor, who were held in serfdom.
2. Dominance of the civil state by the monasteries.
3. Corruption of justice.
4. The debauchery of friars and secular priests.
5. The fostering of superstition in place of real religion.
6. The extortion of exorbitant fees for religious offices.
7. Almost total exclusion of Filipinos from any voice in either church or state.
8. Suppression of freedom of assembly and of speech.

The fruit of these injustices and complaints was revolution. Insurrection broke out on August 26, 1896, at Balintawak. The supreme commander of the revolutionary forces was General Emilio Aguinaldo (still living in Cavite Province, a pensioner of the U. S. Government). The original impetus of the rebellion was checked in fifty-two days by a new consignment of 28,000 Spanish soldiers rushed in for the emergency; but after the death of Rizal rebellion flared again, only to be broken by superior Spanish forces. Aguinaldo was exiled to Hong Kong by the end of the year 1897, and the threat to Spanish power seemed to be crushed.<sup>16</sup>

#### ENTER THE UNITED STATES

Then entered the United States of America into the picture. The following Spring the United States was at war with Spain, and on May 1, 1898, Admiral George Dewey engaged and sank the Spanish navy in Manila Bay. This brought General Aguinaldo out of

14. *Ibid.*, p. 382.

15. Osias and Lorenzana, *op. cit.*, p. 39. Also E. K. and I. W. Higdon, *From Carabao to Clipper* (New York: Friendship, 1941), p. 19.

16. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, *op. cit.*

exile, and on May 19 he returned and led in the renewal of hostilities against Spain. Less than a month later—June 12, 1898—the Philippines were declared to be a free and independent state. The new republic was organized September 9, 1898, with Aguinaldo as president and the capital at Malolos, about thirty-five miles north of Manila.

Meanwhile, the defeat and expulsion of the Spanish having been achieved, it was expected by the Filipinos that the American forces would withdraw. Instead the U. S. Army remained. Filipinos now began to wonder if they had fought a war of liberation only to exchange one set of Western masters for another. American and Filipino relations deteriorated from the first. On February 4, 1899, conflict broke out in Manila, and Aguinaldo declared war against the United States. Superior American forces quickly broke the back of the Filipino government. The revolutionary capital at Malolos was captured March 31, 1899, although mopping-up operations against guerrilla bands in the mountains required another five or six years. At last the Americans came into unchallenged authority throughout the islands.

It is significant that the constitution of the Malolos Republic, passed on November 29, 1898, was equipped with a provision, article five, which separated church and state and guaranteed freedom of worship to all citizens according to the dictates of their own conscience. This was after the defeat of Spain and before the outbreak of hostilities with the United States. It is common to assume that many of the parliamentary, social, and religious reforms of the twentieth century in the Philippines are the direct result of unilateral action by the United States. Much nearer the truth would be an observation that the Filipinos themselves were already on the way to democracy, to separation of church and state, and to religious reformation. America was successful in the Philippines in part because the national ambitions of America for the Philippines so closely meshed with the Filipino's national ideal for himself. Naturally, it required some time for the Filipinos to discover this and for their suspicion of and hostility toward their new masters to turn to trust and gratitude.

President McKinley's first commission to the Philippines reported to the U. S. Congress in February 1900. There were eight conclusions, from which we quote the following:

1. The United States cannot withdraw from the Philippine Islands. We are there and duty binds us to remain. There is no escape from our responsibility to the Filipinos and to mankind for the government of the archipelago and the amelioration of the condition of the inhabitants.

2. The Filipinos are wholly unprepared for independence, and if independence were given to them they could not maintain it.

7. So far as the finances of the Philippines permit, public education should be promptly established, and, when established, free to all.

8. The greatest care should be taken in the selection of officials for administration. They should be men of the highest character and fitness, and partisan politics should be entirely separated from the government of the Philippines.<sup>17</sup>

To the administrative Board of Commissions to the Philippine Islands then created President McKinley wrote detailed instructions in a letter dated April 7, 1900, from which we quote:

... the natives of the islands, both in the cities and in the rural communities, shall be afforded the opportunity to manage their own affairs to the fullest extent of which they are capable, and subject to the least degree of supervision and control which a careful study of their capacities and observation of the workings of native control show to be consistent with the maintenance of law, order, and loyalty.<sup>18</sup>

The high humanitarianism of American intentions toward the Philippines are nowhere more adequately reflected than in the following paragraph from President McKinley's same letter:

In all the forms of government and administration . . . the commission should bear in mind that the government which they are establishing is designed not for our satisfaction, or for the expression of our theoretical views, but for the happiness, peace, and prosperity of the people of the Philippine Islands, and the measures adopted should be made to conform to their customs, their habits, and even their prejudices, to the fullest extent consistent with the accomplishment of the indispensable requisites of just and effective government.<sup>19</sup>

17. *Harper's Encyclopedia of United States History* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1905), VII:176.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 177.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 178.

As first civil governor of the islands, William Howard Taft quickly addressed himself to a correction of some of the worst abuses of the Spanish regime. Of interest to us here is the fact that he negotiated with the Pope for the purchase of 410,000 acres of friar lands, which he bought December 23, 1903, for \$7,250,000. These acres were later sold to Filipinos.<sup>20</sup>

In this same visit with the Pope, in 1902, Taft also asked for the replacement of some Spanish bishops by Americans, and requested that those friars who had proved obnoxious to their flocks should not be returned to their parishes. The result was an immediate diminution of the religious orders. In 1898 there had been 1,000 friars in the islands; by 1903 there were only 246.<sup>21</sup> Other reforms followed. Filipinos were admitted to the seminaries to train for the priesthood. Dutch, Belgian, and Tyrolese missionaries were sent to join with the Spanish and American priests, thus imparting an international flavor to the Roman Catholic community. By 1936 a majority of the parishes were in charge of Filipino priests. Of the ten bishops of the church seven were Filipinos, two were Americans, one was a Spaniard. The Archbishop was Filipino, though in more recent years his authority is overshadowed by the Papal Nuncio dispatched by the Pope to Manila since Philippine independence. The Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines today is a greatly chastened institution, though it still bears many of the marks of the heritage of corruption from its Spanish days. These, together with stirrings of reform, shall engage us later.

#### PHILIPPINE PROTESTANTISM

The opening of the American regime in the Philippines also meant the coming of American school teachers and of American Protestant missionaries. The influences of the American occupation have been deep and far-reaching, but the present religious life of the Philippines is by no means explained solely by influence from abroad. Even before the Americans came, there were forces at work which would probably have produced a Protestant community. And the dynamics of the popular demand for Filipino national self-determination are felt not only in the Congress but throughout the church to this day. It is ultimately to Filipino pride and na-

20. Latourette, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

21. *Ibid.*

tionalism, and not to American Protestantism, that we must look for the roots of such bodies as the Philippine Independent Church (Catholic but not Roman), the independent Methodists and Presbyterians, and the Iglesia ni Cristo of Felix Manalo. These were indigenous churches from their beginnings.

Pre-American Protestants date from 1873 when an English business man in Manila succeeded in distributing several copies of the New Testament to various parts of the Islands by disguising the covers. He did this work on behalf of the British and Foreign Bible Society. One of his New Testaments fell into the hands of a Dominican friar, Alfonso Lallave, whose life and teachings were so changed by it that he was brought to trial in Manila, defrocked and exiled to Spain. There, through the help and encouragement of the Bible Society, he translated the Gospel of Luke into the Pangasinan dialect, the first portion of the Bible to be printed in a Filipino language. In 1896, Don Pascual Pabete, a journalist who was a political exile to Spain, under the inspiration of R. O. Walker of the Bible Society translated the synoptic gospels and the Acts of the Apostles into the Tagalog dialect. Thus, as an underground movement, Protestantism began in the Philippines within the shadow and under the ban of the Spanish regime. Before the Americans came there were thirty-five tiny congregations with a total of about four hundred members.<sup>22</sup>

#### THE AGLIPAYAN MOVEMENT

*The Filipino Independent Church* is a Catholic church independent of Rome. As such it is analogous to the Anglican and the Eastern Orthodox churches. According to the statement of its present Supreme Bishop, Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr., the church follows "the faith of the Ecumenical Councils of the undivided church." It recognizes the three-fold ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons, believes in seven sacraments, subscribes to the Apostles and the Nicene Creeds. Even so, "nothing that cannot be proved by the Holy Scriptures is to be held as necessary to salvation."<sup>23</sup> This church is completely indigenous; its clergy are all

22. Virgil A. Sly, *The Philippines—A Christian Opportunity* (Indianapolis: United Christian Missionary Society, 1950), pp. 7, 8.

23. The Most Rev. Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr., "Historical Statement," *The Christian Register* (Official publication of the Philippine Independent Church), August 2, 1952, p. 3.

Filipinos; its congregations are entirely self-supporting. Services are conducted in the people's own dialects. Also called the *Independent Catholic Church of the Philippines*, and *Iglesia Filipina Independiente*, this church is popularly called the *Aglipayan Movement*, after its first Supreme Bishop, Gregorio Aglipay y Labayan.

Membership of the Filipino Independent Church now numbers about one and a half million; in the first flush of its early victories it held as many as three or four million. But for an adverse court ruling in 1906, awarding church properties to the Roman Church, the Independents might easily have become as strong as the Roman Catholic Church.

Aglipay had been a distinguished Roman Catholic churchman. He had risen to the station of ecclesiastical governor of Nueva Segovia, and was then in Tarlac in 1899 president of the national council of Roman Catholic priests. Under General Aguinaldo he served with the rank of general as chaplain of the revolutionary forces. He was a member of the Malolos congress.<sup>24</sup>

But Aglipay was an exception; few Filipinos could aspire to positions of influence in the church. Don Isabelo de los Reyes, an associate of Aglipay's, was dispatched by many like-minded Filipinos to Rome at the turn of the century to seek the appointment of more Filipino priests as bishops. His petition was rejected. He returned to Manila, called a mass meeting August 2, 1902, in which Aglipay was spontaneously chosen as the supreme bishop of the secession. In addition to its attack upon a foreign clergy, the new movement opposed Mariolatry, the abuses of indulgences, and celibacy as the rule of the clergy. "In certain sections," writes the present Supreme Bishop, "almost the entire population of provinces deserted *en masse* the altars of Rome and joined the native church."<sup>25</sup>

The Aglipay reform looked like a mass movement. Bishop Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr., himself lists three reasons for the defection of the first millions. Beside the "inevitable reaction" to a first enthusiasm, he says, these are the causes: "(a) An insufficient number of priests to minister adequately to such a multitude." We may add that the problem of a trained priesthood has persisted to the present day, but that the Protestant Episcopal church in the Philippines has recently come to the aid of the Independents by offering

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*



to train their priesthood in their seminary, St. Andrews in Manila. "(b) the award of all church property to the Roman Catholic Church by the Supreme Court of the Philippines on November 24, 1906." This was the result of a suit in which the Independents had claimed ownership of the buildings which housed their congregations in those areas where whole parishes had followed them into the new movement. A different outcome of this suit would have given a very different religious complexion to the Philippines today.

"(c) The unsympathetic attitude of other Christian bodies toward the movement. The Unitarians alone espoused the cause of the new church with the result that a few of the leaders . . . became infected with the tenets of that movement."<sup>26</sup> In fact, it was that early taint of Unitarianism that blocked all attempts to secure ordination in the apostolic succession for the new bishop, and that finally produced a schism in the movement.

Even without the blessings of apostolic ordination, Aglipay was ordained Bishop January 18, 1903, and served in that status until his death in 1940, despite appeals to the Protestant Episcopal church, and the Old Catholic church of Switzerland. Since the war, however, recognition has come from American Episcopalians. On November 6, 1947, the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church meeting in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, approved apostolic ordination for the clergy of the Independents. Accordingly, Henry Knox Sherrill came to Manila, and on April 7, 1948, in the Pro-Cathedral Church of St. Luke, ordained three bishops for the Philippine Islands. He was assisted in this service by Normal S. Brinstead, Bishop of the missionary district of the Philippines.<sup>27</sup>

The writer has seen no estimate of the numerical strength of the "liberal wing," a schism produced by continuing sympathy with the early leanings toward Unitarianism. This church is headed by Bishop Santiago A. Fonacier, installed October 14, 1952, at the Church of Heroes and Martyrs, Manila.<sup>28</sup>

The influence of the Aglipayan movement seems to have been fairly estimated by Supreme Bishop Reyes:

The Church has exerted a strong influence on the whole Christian movement in the Philippines. By its courageous stand

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26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Manila Daily Times*, date lost.

against the autocratic power and the errors of the Roman Church it has made the work of the other churches easier, and has been the indirect means of bringing about reforms within the Roman Church. By its fight for the recognition of the ability and rights of the Filipino priesthood it has made no small contribution to the development of national Christian leadership in the Islands.<sup>29</sup>

#### THE WHOLE PICTURE

Before passing to the story of the coming and spread of the Protestant church, it may be helpful to pause for a panoramic view. The latest statistics available (those for 1952) show a population of 19,234,182 people. These are distributed religiously in approximately the following manner:

Nominally Roman Catholic . . . . .	15,000,000
Philippine Independent Church . . . . .	1,500,000
Moslems . . . . .	500,000
Pagans (primitive animists) . . . . .	300,000
Protestants . . . . .	600,000

These are not exact census figures but are careful estimates made by the officers of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines.<sup>30</sup> A glance at these figures will show the justification for the statement that the Philippines is the only Christian nation in the Orient.

The Protestant movement, from its inception until the present, has been in the islands scarcely more than fifty years. Many denominations have entered since World War II. Six hundred thousand members does not seem to be a large number, but in terms of proportionate populations, it is five times the size of the entire Christian community in Japan, and Christianity has been active in Japan for a century. Only among the primitive peoples of central Africa has the church had a more encouraging response. When we go beyond statistics to evaluate the influence of the Protestant community in the Philippines, the results are even more encouraging; for, as was true in the work of the great European Reformers, the presence of the Protestant church in the Philippines has been a stimulant and purifier to the Roman Catholic church, which, following the lead of the Protestants, has entered vigorously into

29. Reyes, *op. cit.*

30. Hugh Bousman, ed., *Some Facts About the Philippines* (Manila: The United Church of Christ in the Philippines, 1952), pp. 8, 16.

education and medicine, and has corrected many of the most glaring abuses of the Spanish period.

About 80 percent of the Protestant population belongs to denominations which are members of the Philippine Federation of Christian Churches (analogous to our National Council of Churches). With the exception of the Episcopalians, who are not members, Federation churches are also those which began missionary work immediately before or immediately following the year 1900—or the offshoots or mergers of such churches. Today they are only six in number: The Convention of Philippine Northern Baptists, The Methodist Church, The United Church of Christ in the Philippines (a merger of four denominations: Presbyterian U.S.A., Evangelical United Brethren, Congregational, and some Disciples of Christ—those in Northern Luzon Island), The IEMELIF Church (independent, indigenous Filipino Methodist), the UNIDA church (a like group of Presbyterians), and the Disciples of Christ in the Tagalog area. Thus, stated in terms of the American denominations which are the parent churches, the Philippine Federation includes: Methodists, Presbyterian U.S.A., Congregationalists, Baptists, Evangelical United Brethren, and Disciples of Christ. The largest of the constituent bodies are the Methodist Church with 90,000 members, and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines with 100,000 members.

Outside the Federation, with varying degrees of friendliness toward it, are such bodies as the Philippine Episcopal church, Assemblies of God, Church of Christ (Independent—"the Wolfe group"), Christian and Missionary Alliance, Church of the Nazarene, Free Methodist Church, International Church of the Four Square Gospel, Pilgrim Holiness Church, Seventh Day Adventists, Salvation Army, Southern Baptist Missions, United Gospel Tabernacles. Two unique and highly influential fundamentalist groups which have entered the Philippines since World War II are not churches though they work with and through churches; these are the Far East Broadcasting Company, Inc., owning the powerful Manila Radio Station DZAS, and the Far East Bible Institute and Seminary, Inc.<sup>31</sup> Since the war there has been an influx of fundamentalist splinter groups; it was orally reported to this writer by a missionary executive in

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31. *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 17.

Manila that there are now no less than sixty-six of these on Mindanao alone. For the most part, relationships between these and the old-line churches tend to be friendly, though a recent "healing-evangelism" campaign of the Assemblies of God in Manila proselytized heavily from the Methodist church, thus creating a rift which is disturbing to the whole cooperative Protestant community.

Parenthetically, let it be said that a good deal is to be learned about religious life in the Philippines from the above-mentioned "healing-evangelism" campaign of the Assemblies of God. The month long meeting in Roxas Park on Taft Avenue drew as many as 30,000 people in a single night—principally to witness and benefit from alleged miracles of healing. The historic animism of the Filipino, which has been more organized than exterminated by the Roman Catholic church, makes the Philippines a uniquely fertile soil for such a presentation. Belief in demon possession, which is widespread, was unashamedly exploited to create a social sensation which engaged the attention and the discussion of the entire city. Nevertheless—so powerful is the Roman Catholic influence in excluding Protestant news from press and radio—this meeting, continuing for a whole month, did not get even a line of copy in a Manila daily newspaper and received no notice in the regular news broadcasts of any radio station except DZAS (so far as observed by this writer, who was in Manila at the time). Thus are disclosed some of the tortuous intertwining influences which complicate and handicap the growth of Protestantism in the Philippines!

#### PROTESTANT BEGINNINGS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Fortunately, these trends toward a religious kaleidoscope of fractured lights were absent from the Protestant movement which first evangelized the Philippines. This work began cooperatively; comity agreements were entered into as early as 1901, the same year as the birth of the Evangelical Union—forerunner of the present Federation. Even earlier than this, in the spring of 1898, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., while launching its own mission work, took the first steps to promote a cooperative spirit with the major missionary boards which might be contemplating the launching of their own missions. Accordingly, the Executive Council of the Presbyterian Missionary Society in June of 1898 recommended that:

The Christian people of America should immediately and

prayerfully consider the duty of entering the door which God in His providence is thus opening. This appears to be, so far as we can judge, the feeling of the Presbyterian Church. . . . However, it is only fair to presume that this sentiment is not peculiar to Presbyterians. Indeed, there are rumors that the Foreign Mission Boards of other churches are disposed to consider the relation of their Boards to these opening fields. . . . We believe that the new situation thus providentially forced upon us affords an excellent opportunity not only for beginning this work, but for beginning it right from the viewpoint of Christian fellowship and economical use of men and money. To this end we recommend that the Executive Council be directed to hold an early conference with the representatives of the American Board, the Baptist Missionary Union, the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Board of Foreign and Domestic Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America with a view to a frank and mutual understanding as to the responsibilities of American Christians for the people of Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippine Islands, and an agreement as to the most effective distribution of the work among the several Boards.<sup>32</sup>

The projected meeting with the various boards was held on July 13; the agreements reached were to be implemented in the Philippines in 1901 through the Evangelical Union, above referred to. Those participating in the 1901 comity agreement were Methodists, Presbyterians, United Brethren, Baptists, Congregationalists, Christian and Missionary Alliance, and Disciples of Christ. The Episcopalians, refusing to compete with the Roman Catholics, decided to concentrate their services on their own American nationals in Manila and their mission to the Moros in the south and the primitives in the mountains. The territory drawn by the Disciples of Christ included Manila, "regarded as common territory for all the missions," such parts of southern Luzon as were designated by agreement with the Presbyterians, and the northern Luzon provinces of Ilocos Norte, Abra, Ilocos Sur, as well as the northern section of Mindoro Island.<sup>33</sup> To these have been added a work opened only since World War II in the Apayao region of Mountain Province.

32. Osias and Lorenzana, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-87.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

The dean of the Protestant movement in the Philippines was Presbyterian James B. Rogers who landed in Manila April 21, 1899, following an experience of eight years in Brazil. But he was soon joined by others. The Methodists arrived the same year. The Northern Baptists were on the scene in 1900. In 1901, three groups arrived: United Brethren, Episcopalians, and Disciples. The Congregationalists came in 1902, as did the Christian and Missionary Alliance. This was the early surge followed by a brief lull. The Seventh Day Adventists came in 1910.<sup>34</sup> The Episcopalian representative was none other than Bishop Charles H. Brent, later renowned as one of the great pioneers of the ecumenical movement. It is an irony of history that the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Philippines is not a member of the Federation and that it is not in the United Church of Christ, but the church has been far from as aloof as these formal facts tend to indicate. The nature of the Episcopalian mission—to Americans and to the Moros and primitives—greatly reduced the necessity for cooperation which confronted the other churches. The ministry of the Episcopal Church to the Americans themselves in these early days was of considerable importance; two of the men baptized by Bishop Brent were General J. J. Pershing and Governor Leonard Wood.<sup>35</sup>

#### SOCIAL SERVICE

The goal of the Protestant mission from the first was much broader than that of the Roman Catholic Church in any preceding period. It was not simply to preach the gospel, to administer the sacraments, and to save souls for eternity. It was rather to meet all the needs of the people, or to see that they were met. Thus the church soon found itself concerned with matters of health, sanitation, medicine, education, translation and publishing, cooperative marketing, credit unions and like enterprises designed to lift the living standards of the Filipino people.

The Association of Christian Schools and Colleges lists sixty-five Christian schools with 30,000 students.<sup>36</sup> Notable among these are Silliman University at Dumaguette, Oriental Negros; Central Philippine College at Iloilo, Panay; Philippine Christian Colleges at

34. Latourette, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

35. Osias and Lorenzana, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

36. Bousman, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

Manila; Northern Christian College at Laoag, Ilocos Norte; and Union Theological Seminary, Manila. The American stimulus to education, in part due to the church, has been phenomenal. As against the year 1903 when there were 266,800 pupils enrolled in public schools and 89,561 in private schools, the year 1951 found 4,173,061 in public schools, and 601,442 in private schools.<sup>37</sup> One of the world's largest concentrations of college students is to be found in Manila, where it is estimated that there are more than one hundred thousand young people with college and graduate rank. Taking up the Manila telephone directory one evening, this writer found no less than forty-six institutions listed with the word "college" or "university" in their names; this figure did not include law schools and other institutions which appeared to be of college rank.

The world literacy program which has won Frank Laubauck a global reputation began in the Philippines, and it continues to thrive there.

Medical missions proved to be far more needed at the beginning than at present. The Republic of the Philippines now has an aggressive program of public health, thus making missionary work in this area less necessary. Nonetheless there are sixteen Protestant hospitals with about 1,000 beds.<sup>38</sup> Without peer among these is the Methodists' Mary Johnson Hospital in Manila's slums. There is Christian work today at the nine government-operated Philippine leprosariae, where the personal, moral, and spiritual needs of 6,290 lepers concern the church which ministers among them. More than seven hundred of these lepers are Protestant Christians.<sup>39</sup>

Bible translation and distribution is a particularly difficult task in the Philippines because of the large number of languages or "dialects." It is said that there are eighty-seven of these; many of them have never been reduced to writing. Fortunately, the eight principal dialects are used by a total of about 90 percent of the people; but, even so, producing complete Bibles in eight different languages is an enormous task. This was done by the American Bible Society between 1905 and 1938. Gospel portions in many other dialects have been added to these complete Bibles. Even now

37. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

39. Mrs. Eugene A. Hessel, "Christian Ministry at the Nine Philippine Leprosariae," *Philippine Christian Advance*, August, 1953, pp. 8-9, 16.

an orthography for several dialects is being created so the Bible can be translated into them as well. The work of revising the earlier translations is also in progress.

The British and Foreign Bible Society until 1919 divided the territory with, and then assigned its work in the Philippines to, the American Bible Society. This work now heads up in the Bible House in Manila under the executive leadership of W. H. (Harry) Fonger, regarded as the dean of the present missionaries. Mr. Fonger is a Canadian Disciple who, with his wife Leith, began his work as a UCMS missionary in Northern Luzon more than 30 years ago.

Mr. Fonger reports that the British and Foreign Bible Society did a singular work in Spain shortly after the year 1896, when many Filipino leaders were in exile there. The Society soon had several of them engaged in the translation of the New Testament; work was begun in at least five of the languages, namely: Ilocano, Pampangan, Tagalog, Bicol, and Visayan. Translated in Spain, the New Testament portions were printed in England. Reports Mr. Fonger,

When the early missionaries from the United States entered the Philippines in 1899 and the years following, many of them carried copies of the Gospels in the languages of the people of the Philippines. It was considered practically as a miracle by the people of Manila. . . .<sup>40</sup>

Undoubtedly, this work of translation is one of the reasons for the quick success of the Protestant mission in gaining a hearing and in winning converts. The work of the American Bible Society across the years has been influential far beyond Protestant circles. The Roman Catholic Church has changed from its inflexible opposition to the Bible in the hands of the people to the encouragement of Bible reading, and has provided its own approved translations to make this possible.

There are many other aspects of social service that should be discussed in any presentation of the full picture of Protestant missions. Dr. Ernest Frei has experimented with cooperative marketing. Mr. Allen Huber pioneered in credit unions, which, according to an official of the Federation, are now so numerous and so active that the Federation collects about seven hundred dollars per year just for the sale of literature and ledgers for their use. There is a

<sup>40</sup>. Bousman, *op. cit.*, p. 15.



Rural Life department of the Federation with a full time secretary; Mr. Huber was also the pioneer in this development. And Mrs. Huber was the moving spirit behind National Home and Family Week which now has the official support of the Philippine government. It is the object of this week to center attention upon a steady improvement of such areas of family life as health, sanitation, child care, nutrition, parent education, and related subjects. Agricultural missions conduct pilot farms to show the people what improved farming can do; a boys' school, at Legaspi, Albay, for example, has cut its food bill in half by cultivating a school garden which at the same time serves as a demonstration to the surrounding farmers of what can be done with improved methods of agriculture. There are a few small factories conducted by individual churches for their members; Rev. Catalino Laysico of the Church of Christ (Disciples) at Makati, Rizal, recently learned wood-turning at the government handicrafts pavillion, so that he could augment his own income, but also to teach it to those of his members who may be interested. There are God's Acres in the Philippines, and there are coming to be God's fishponds. The latter is made possible by the introduction of tilapia to the Philippines from the Oriental mainland; this fresh water fish, which is very prolific and highly edible, is grown in specially constructed fresh water pools.

The list of social activities inspired by the church might be extended. Remember the controlling conviction of the first Protestant missionaries: The church should meet all the needs of the people, or see that they are met. The work that has been introduced so far is no more than a beginning, and the church itself will not have to continue all of it. It is heartening to see the Philippine government entering into many of these areas—such as better roads, artesian wells for safe drinking water and irrigation, public health, agricultural loans, and agricultural extension.

The steady growth of the Protestant church is shown by the following figures:<sup>41</sup>

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Churches</i>	<i>Membership</i>
1903	45	4,000
1918	594	125,000
1928	951	131,000
1948	1,237	595,000

41. Sly, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

A comparative table of missionaries is also interesting:<sup>42</sup>

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Missionaries</i>
1910	167
1914	204
1924	287
1936	295

At the present time, except for the large influx of missionaries from American splinter groups, the number of missionary personnel is probably in decline. This is due principally to the development of Filipino leadership. This writer recently asked Dr. Charles Mossbrook of the Methodist mission how many missionaries the Methodists had in the Philippines. "Fifty-six," he replied, "but it is probably too many. Many missionaries are doing jobs that Filipinos themselves want to do and which they are largely ready to begin." In 1922 the Disciples of Christ had twenty-five missionaries in the Philippines; today they have only thirteen. It is probable that the Disciple force should be stronger than it is, but it does not need to move all the way back up to its size in 1922.

A look at the comparative missionary strength of seven leading boards reveals the following:<sup>43</sup>

<i>Board</i>	<i>Number of Missionaries</i>
Methodists . . . . .	56
Interboards (Congregational, Presbyterian, Evangelical United Brethren) serving the United Church	97
Reformed Church of America . . . . .	15
American Baptists . . . . .	30
U. C. M. S. . . . .	13

The writer was unable to get exact figures for each of the three boards completely integrated in the Interboard Office which channels missionary service to the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, but he was told by a Presbyterian missionary that there are now forty-two of them in the islands, with a number on furlough. The full Presbyterian complement for the Philippines, he said, was sixty missionaries.

42. Latourette, *op. cit.*, pp. 212, 270.

43. By personal interviews with Manila missionaries, Charles Mossbrook, Rodney A. Sundberg and Alexander Christie.

## CHRISTIAN COOPERATION

From the very beginning, and even before missionaries had been sent to the islands, a spirit of cooperation has permeated the Protestant mission. Today there are four main types of cooperation: (1) The Federation, analogous to the National Council of Churches in the U. S., (2) The Philippine Interboard Office, an agency of several missionary boards, (3) the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, and (4) functional cooperation for specific purposes. We shall look briefly at each of these.

*The Philippine Federation of Christian Churches* is the present name of the council which first met in 1901 as the Evangelical Union to arrive at a comity agreement among six bodies of missionaries then entering the Islands. The Union changed its name to the National Christian Council in 1929, and ten years later assumed its present title.<sup>44</sup> Begun strictly as an organization of missionaries and missionary executives, the Union was quickly expanded to include Filipinos; today the Federation is headed by a Filipino president and a Filipino general secretary, and most of its divisions are also administered by nationals.

Understaffed, overcrowded in inadequate office space, and greatly overloaded, the full time executives of the Federation supervise departments of Rural Life, Christian Education, Home and Family Life, and Christian Literature and Literacy. They publish the monthly magazine, *The Philippine Christian Advance*, the quarterly *Filipino Youth*, a new series of grade Sunday School lessons (there are no denominationally published Sunday School lessons issued in the islands), and a tremendous number of incidental pieces of literature for specific uses. Youth work camps undertake projects not only within the archipelago, but beyond it; shortly after the cessation of hostilities a group of Filipino young people proceeded to Japan where they rebuilt the bombed-out buildings of a Christian church and school in Tokyo. This was done by members of a nation who had suffered heavily because of Japanese brutality—a nation which to this day has not concluded a peace treaty with Japan and which will not suffer a Japanese resident or business man to cross its shores. Such courageous international pioneering did not go unnoticed in Japan.

44. Latourette, *op. cit.*, pp. 212, 213, 271.

Due to inadequate local support, the budget of the Federation is underwritten largely by American missionary boards.

*The Philippine Interboard Office* is an administrative field office of three American missionary societies: Congregational, Presbyterian, and Evangelical United Brethren. The Disciples of Christ and the Reformed Church of America also cooperate on a limited basis, largely through the treasury services of the Board.

It might be said that the Philippines Interboard Office is a projection in the Philippines of the offices of mission boards in the United States. The purpose of this office on the field is to serve in a liaison capacity as a connecting link between the United Church of Christ in the Philippines on the one hand, and the American Boards of Missions cooperating with the Church on the other hand.<sup>45</sup>

This board has two officers, a field representative, who at present is Rodney A. Sundberg, and a treasurer, Ernest Frei. Most of the details of missionary furlough travel, residence, salary, conferences, and like questions which concern more than a hundred missionaries are handled through this office.

*The United Church of Christ in the Philippines* came into existence in 1948 when several denominational bodies merged. This merger incorporated the earlier United Evangelical Church of the Philippines, formed in 1929.<sup>46</sup> The principal churches merging to form the union were Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Evangelical United Brethren, Disciples of Christ (except those in the Tagalog area). The United Church, or UCCP as it is often called, has about 100,000 members and a strong national organization headed by a General Assembly and four administrative bishops, one of whom is moderator of the assembly, and all of whom serve as district supervisors over the four regions into which the islands have been divided. Although it is led by bishops the polity of UCCP is completely democratic. The UCCP does not infringe upon the autonomy of local churches, and allows self-determination to the constituting conferences. The original comity agreements now work to advantage here in producing harmony within the conferences; the Disciples of Christ, who came into the UCCP, for example, were the

45. "The Philippine Interboard Office," *Philippine Christian Advance*, August, 1953, p. 4.

46. Latourette, *op. cit.*

only Protestants in their region of Northern Luzon, and when they entered the union they did so as one conference, all the membership and leadership of which derived from the Disciples themselves. The same thing is true in other areas for Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Evangelical United Brethren. Nevertheless, the United Church is far more than a loose federation of old loyalties. Because of a strong constitution, a vigorous indigenous leadership, and an evident will to be one in Christ, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines is a highly harmonious body. The Presbyterians have kept complete faith with the United Church by dissolving their own mission; now all Presbyterian missionaries who are sent to the islands are assigned to their specific tasks—not by the Presbyterian Board—but by the personnel committee of the United Church under the chairmanship of Bishop Dia, a Filipino. Other boards also work in consultation with this personnel committee.

More than harmonious, the United Church is vigorous. It has its own Board of Missions which is active in home missions opportunities in the Philippines and which has now launched a foreign mission to Thailand and to Indonesia.<sup>47</sup> August 30, 1953, was the date of its first commissioning service. At that time Mr. and Mrs. Jorge Quismundo and Mr. and Mrs. Jose Estoye were commissioned for service in Indonesia and Thailand. Mr. and Mrs. Estoye arrived in Thailand, October 8, 1953, where they are cooperating closely with UCMS missionaries at Nakon Pathom. Mr. and Mrs. Jorge Quismundo were delayed until the spring of 1954 in the securing of Indonesian visas. It need not be pointed out that Asian missionaries from the Philippines to the Asian peoples of Thailand and Indonesia will be able to do more than Occidental missionaries can do, and more quickly. These peoples of Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines are all Malayan peoples closely bound by the same blood and cultural heritage. A new day for the Orient is opening when Oriental Christians begin to take up the Christian missionary task.

It must also be pointed out that the United Church of Christ in the Philippines is taking a step which will greatly strengthen the church in the Philippines itself, for a church is most vigorously and

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47. Stephen L. Smith, "A Historic Day," *Philippine Christian Advance*, September, 1953, pp. 8-9.

completely the church when it is imbued with missionary spirit and enterprise.

*Functional cooperation for specific purposes* is the fourth kind of Christian cooperation in the Philippines. Union Theological Seminary, begun in 1907 by the Methodists and Presbyterians, is one such activity. The Disciples have been in since 1916. The United Brethren joined prior to that, in 1911, and the Congregationalists in 1919.<sup>48</sup> A large number of missionaries from the various denominations serve on the faculty of this institution, but the number of Filipino teachers is growing, and since June, 1954, when Dr. Benjamin I. Guansing became president, the school has been headed by a Filipino, the first national to head a theological seminary for any Protestant or Catholic group in the Islands.

As these words are being written, a Protestant chapel is being erected on the campus of the University of the Philippines at Quezon City, near Manila. This building, designed to be architecturally expressive of an indigenous church, will be the center of work for a Protestant chaplain, at present Richard C. Bush, who serves in the name of united Protestantism. Disciples of Christ have a share in the building costs and in the support of this ministry.<sup>49</sup> The Protestant chapel is the only institution of its kind in the Philippines. It is an implementation of the freedom of religion and the separation of church and state guaranteed in the Philippine constitution—both of which are vigorously opposed by the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. Most large educational institutions are sufficiently under Roman Catholic ecclesiastical control to exclude such a witness. That this chapel exists at all is due not only to the freedom granted by the Philippine constitution but also to the cooperation of the Philippine Protestants, though it was initiated by the latter.

There are two indigenous Methodist and Presbyterian communions which are now members of the Federation, but which began as schisms from the regular Methodists and Presbyterians under the impetus of nationalistic feelings, and perhaps also because of the wounded pride of Filipino leaders. These are known in the Philippines as IEMELIF (*Iglesia Evangelica Metodista en las*

48. Union Theological Seminary of the Philippines, *Catalogue 1953-1955*.

49. Several articles in *Philippine Christian Advance*, February, 1954.

*Islas Filipinas*) and UNIDA (*Iglesia Evangelica Unida de Cristo*). Both denominations are completely independent of missionary support, either of personnel or finances. All pastors are native Filipinos and are supported by the giving of their own members. The weakness of both churches lies in the same factor that gives them strength; the present stewardship of people as poor as the Filipinos is inadequate to support a full time ministry, let alone to train that ministry for its task. But, even so, many of the missionary-related churches suffer from the same handicap.

IEMELIF was the outgrowth of a religio-patriotic organization formed in the Methodist Church of Tondo (Manila slums) in 1907. This society, called *Katotohanan* (Truth), was a strong advocate of political and religious self-determination for the Filipino people. Its moving spirit was Nicholas Zamora, one of the first converts of the Methodist mission. Zamora became insulted because of the remark of an American missionary who had said, "The Filipinos will never become good pastors." An early slogan of the society shows the thinking of the organization: "While God has given other nations the right to serve and administer the religious life of their people, the Filipinos were also endowed by the divine Providence with the same right." The agitation of the Katotohanan Society and especially of its head, Nicholas Zamora, resulted in a schism on February 28, 1909; this was the beginning of the new denomination. The battle cry of the new, struggling denomination, which now has seventy-six ministers and 20,000 members, was "It is better to live in your own small nipa hut than in a palatial mansion which belongs to another."<sup>50</sup>

Essentially, Presbyterian UNIDA has the same kind of rootage as Methodist IEMELIF—wounded native pride and the desire for nationalistic self-determination. UNIDA now has 15,000 members and fifty ministers.<sup>51</sup> It, too, is a cooperating member of the Philippine Federation of Christian Churches.

#### PHILIPPINE ANGEL

A unique religious phenomenon is the movement of Felix Manalo, officially called *Iglesia ni Cristo*, but more popularly known

50. M. C. Gutierrez, "The IEMELIF—First Indigenous Church of the Philippines," *Philippine Christian Advance*, April, 1950.

51. Bousman, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

as *The Manalistas*.<sup>52</sup> Felix Manalo, until then a Roman Catholic, became a Protestant in 1902. He was first associated with the Disciples of Christ until 1910, when personal scandal caused his ejection from the church at Sampaloc. For the next four years he associated himself as pastor with various groups including the Seventh Day Adventists. But in the year 1914 he represented himself as the recipient of a divine disclosure which identified him with the fifth angel of Revelation 7:2. The region of "the rising sun" referred to in this same verse, Manalo interpreted to mean the Philippines (which is characterized in the national anthem as "land of the morning, child of the sun returning"). Curiously, the four angels of the four winds in Revelation 7:1 were identified with the four war-time prime ministers: Lloyd George, Orlando, Clemenceau, and Wilson! Their divine mission was the bringing of World War I to a close.

Manalo taught that the church of Christ, as founded in Matthew 16:18, perished in the early centuries, and that it was non-existent until 1914 when he revived it. Iglesia ni Cristo, he says, is the only true church and there is no salvation outside it. Of this church he is himself the Supreme Pastor; he claims a clergy of 2,000 pastors whom he has himself ordained, and a following of four million. This number seems extravagant, but it is conceded by impartial observers that he may well have as many as a million followers. His cathedral-like church and palace at San Juan del Monte, near Manila, is reported to have cost three million pesos—a tremendous sum of money (\$1,500,000) when one remembers that it was collected from the poverty-stricken Filipinos and not from outside sources. Armed guards keep out intruders.

Iglesia ni Cristo is practically a secret society. Services are held each Thursday evening and each Sunday, at which times every member's dues are levied and collected.

As Supreme Pastor, Manalo dictates the sermon topic and scripture to be used in all his churches on a given Sunday. He decides what his members believe, how they are to interpret the Bible, how the church money is to be spent, and how his members are to vote in the civil elections. His pastors are schooled in an extremely liter-

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52. Albert J. Sanders, "A Protestant View of the Iglesia ni Cristo," *The Union Voice*, December, 1952, pp. 8-12, 28.



alistic interpretation of the Bible, without sense of context, and are highly skilled in debate. Tagalogs, having a weakness for sparkling forensics, are often captivated.

The church is non-trinitarian. According to their beliefs, Jesus was only a man, *appointed* to be saviour; he was not the second person of the Trinity. Conveniently, this leaves a larger place in the scheme of things for the Fifth Angel! Baptism is by immersion. The "Holy Supper" is observed once a year. Iglesia ni Cristo, because of its own claim of being the only church, is completely independent. It is an indigenous church. What its future may be escapes prediction; Manalo is about seventy years of age, and "angel" or not, he must soon relinquish the leadership—but to whom and for what mission?

#### WORLD WAR II

No picture of the Philippine church is true that does not take into account the effect of World War II. From December, 1941, until February, 1945, the Philippines was a defeated and captive nation living under the Japanese occupation. In the final months of that occupation many thousands of Filipinos were massacred in a last desperate effort to break the underground resistance which finally made contact with the returning American forces. The "liberation" was even more destructive of towns and cities than the Japanese invasion and occupation had been. Though heartily welcomed by the Filipinos who suffered so bitterly because of it, this liberation completely wiped out many towns, and left its scars in every city. Eighty percent of all church properties were destroyed, mostly by American planes and guns.<sup>53</sup> Many of the bombed buildings have been repaired in a make-shift manner. For example, the church at Bangued, which was a stately cement structure with a finely beamed roof, now stands as a shell of its former glory; a misshapen sheet-metal roof supported by rude timbers is exposed to the full view of the worshippers. The Church of Christ (Disciples) at Paco, Manila, is constructed of corrugated tin nailed to a sketchy wooden framework. Of the original building nothing remains but the broken concrete of the floor and foundations. New chapels have also been built. In seven months residence which took him to all parts of

53. E. K. Higdon, "The Philippines," *Christianity Today* (ed. Henry Smith Leiper (New York: Morehouse-Goram, 1947), pp. 355-368.

Luzon Island the writer saw many churches, but he cannot remember having seen more than two buildings which had not been touched by the war, except those chapels built to replace churches totally destroyed.

The preceding has been concerned with church buildings, but what about the congregations meeting in these buildings? The scars of war are registered there, too, invisibly but indelibly. The two most serious wounds suffered by the churches in this period were inflicted by their loss of missionaries, who were slain or imprisoned, and by the military dictatorship during the Japanese occupation.

Shortly after the Japanese invasion in 1941, "500 opinion formers landed on the Lingayen shores close on the heels of General Homma."<sup>54</sup> The Nipponese command had decided to use thought control rather than brutality to bring the Filipinos into line. Within a few days, January 2, 1942, the religious contingent of this thought control program arrived in Manila. It was composed of twenty-six members, thirteen Protestants and a like number of Roman Catholics. They set up headquarters in the American Union Church building. The Roman Catholic division was headed by Bishop Yoshigoro Taguchi; the Protestant by Rev. Radashi Aiuro, who held a Th.D. degree from Pacific School of Religion, California. His assistant was a Colgate-Rochester graduate, Isamu Chiba.<sup>55</sup> Except for excessive pressure from the military occupation, there are indications that the religious government would have been mild and considerate; as it was, the religious division often found itself checked and overruled.

All missionaries at first were thrown into internment camps. The Filipinos went back to church, but it was a church under observation. Everything about the church had to be reported: the attendance statistics, the times of service, the amount of the offerings, the subject of the sermon. In time, a complete manuscript of every sermon was required in advance of delivery; sometimes propaganda material was interpolated into these manuscripts before they were approved and returned for use.<sup>56</sup>

In keeping with Japanese policy followed in the home islands,

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54. Richard T. Baker, *Darkness of the Sun* (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1947), pp. 218-219.

55. *Ibid.*

56. *Ibid.*, p. 220.

the occupation authority began at once to work for a united Protestantism, the better to deal with the churches. Ignoring the existing federation and evangelical union, the United Evangelical Church of the Philippines was formed by October 11, 1942, but it was not until April 30, 1944, that it was fully ready to operate, and by December American bombing broke up its work. There was a great deal of resistance to the enforced union, not because it was poorly conceived but because it was imposed. Methodists, Episcopalians, Independents, and eleven Churches of Christ refused categorically to recognize or bow to it, but others joined it. With the coming of the American forces in 1945, the union, however, fell to pieces and things reverted to their pre-war status.<sup>57</sup> There were campaigns to discredit some of the leading Filipinos who had participated in the enforced union, and legitimate union movements for a time had hard sledding in consequence of this; but after these immediate effects had worn off it was seen that the Japanese occupation had contributed more to union sentiment than it had destroyed. The case for a United Church was stronger at the end of the war than it had ever been. The same thing has been true in Japan.

#### THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

The Disciples of Christ entered the Philippines in 1901. Two chaplains with the U. S. Army in 1898 and 1899 had seen the opportunities and had reported them enthusiastically to the Foreign Christian Missionary Society; these chaplains were Herman P. Williams and Abram E. Cory. Mr. Williams himself volunteered as a missionary, and with his wife returned to Manila in that capacity in December, 1901. Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Hanna, having been appointed for the same task, arrived a few months earlier—in August, to be exact.<sup>58</sup>

After working little more than a year in Manila, Hanna and Williams felt it their duty to move away from the capital, which was receiving the almost undivided attention of incoming missionaries. They chose northern Luzon, and in January of 1903 left for Laoag, Ilocos Norte, where Dr. and Mrs. Cyrus L. Pickett (both M.D.'s) soon joined them. This was the beginning of a long stream of notable missionaries, which to the fall of 1954 totals exactly seventy

57. *Ibid.*, pp. 225-227.

58. Sly, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

missionaries of the UCMS under regular appointment to the Philippines.

The success of these laborers may be gauged in part by the fact that there are now 136 congregations, forty-eight of which are entirely self-supporting, and that these 136 congregations have a total membership of just under ten thousand—which makes it the second largest national church on any of the mission fields served by the Disciples of Christ.

The Golden Age of Disciple missions, as accounted by the Filipinos themselves, occurred in the 1920's. In the year 1922 the United Christian Missionary Society had twenty-five missionaries in the Philippines, and many thriving educational and medical institutions were serving the church in an effective social outreach. Today, a visitor to Disciple churches in Manila will hear much from the older members about the Mary Child's Hospital with its nurses' training school, and the Albert Allen Memorial Dormitory near the campus of the University of the Philippines.

The former institution, before its sale to private owners in 1932, had trained 299 graduate nurses, from among whom has been formed an active alumni association which still holds monthly meetings. The writer attended one of these alumni meetings in March, 1954. These present included important, key people who were supervising nurses in government hospitals, or who were engaged in social work. One was the wife of a national congressman. Another was the wife of the presiding bishop of the UCCP. At the last yearly convention it was found that there were sixty-two nurses who are still actively engaged in their profession, many of them in supervisory positions. For all of these it is safe to say that the golden age of the Disciples of Christ in the Philippines can be precisely dated from 1915-1932, which are the years when Mary Childs Hospital was a Disciple institution. To attend a meeting of the alumni of the nurses training school of this hospital is to get several clear impressions: (1) Protestant strength has been built into the lives of these graduates. They are the kind of professional leaders that Philippine Protestantism needs in its evangelistic outreach; (2) their love of and loyalty toward the old school as it was in its Disciple days; (3) their present sense of being orphans. Mary Childs Hospital lives on, but it is no longer their alma mater. They live and work without the sense of their alma mater's living support, except

as they keep that alive in their alumni gatherings month by month and in their annual convention.

The Albert Allen Dormitory on Taft Avenue in Manila and the church connected with it was in a most advantageous position to reach the alert, impressionable student population of the capital city. And it was reaching them in significant numbers. But, at the time of the depression, this property too was sold. Other institutional work, some of which persists to the present, has been done in such institutions as the Boys' Christian Training School, and the Girls' Training School at Laoag, the Sally Long Reid Memorial Hospital at Laoag, the Frank Dunn Memorial Hospital at Vigan; the Training School for Nurses, Vigan; the Apayao Christian Academy at Kabugao; the Abra Mountain High School, Lamao; Northern Christian College at Laoag; the Vigan Training School and the Vigan Community Center; and the Christian Hospital at Bangued. Some of these no longer exist. From time to time the program has changed as demands have shifted and in keeping with the available missionary personnel.

In 1953 and 1954 the United Christian Missionary Society is working in the Philippines through five stations: (1) Manila, (2) Vigan, Ilocos Sur, (3) Bangued, Abra, (4) Kabugao, Apayao, Mt. Providence, (5) Laoag, Ilocos Norte. Before the writer left the Philippines at the end of April, 1954, the missionaries then in the islands were distributed as follows: (1) Manila Station: *Dr. and Mrs. George Earle Owen*, assignments, Union Theological Seminary and church oversight in the Tagalog area. *Miss Dorothy Martin*, religious education for the Tagalog area. (2) Vigan Station: *Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Reynolds*; assignment, field secretary of the whole Philippine Mission of UCMS and direction of Vigan Community Center. (3) Bangued Station: *Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Brummett*; assignments, director of Abra Mountain High School and evangelism and church development of Abra Province. (4) Kabugao Station: *Mr. and Mrs. Lynn Keyes*; assignments, directing Apayao Christian Academy, church oversight of highland and lowland Apayao. *Mr. and Mrs. Norwood Tye* were in the United States on furlough. Five of these missionaries were former students at The College of the Bible: Miss Martin, the Brummettes and the Keyes.

As these words are being written in September of 1954, three Disciple missionary couples are aboard the S. S. President Wilson

on their voyage across the Pacific Ocean toward the Philippines. *Mr. and Mrs. Norwood Tye* are returning from furlough; they will be located in Laoag at Northern Christian College. The other two couples are bound for their first term; *Mr. and Mrs. William Keller* and *Mr. and Mrs. John F. White* bring to nine the number of former College of the Bible students now serving the Philippine mission. It is contemplated that the Whites will be assigned to student work in the Manila station and that the Kellers will work along with the Keyes in Apayao. Mr. Tye will resume his duties as field secretary which he relinquished to go on furlough. Dr. and Mrs. Owen are returning to Indianapolis, where Mr. Owen will take up executive responsibilities in the United Christian Missionary Society.

Two serious disasters befell the Filipino Disciples before World War II. One was the church division of the 1920's which produced the faction of independent Churches of Christ called the "Wolfe group" after their leader, Leslie Wolfe. This was a projection of the stateside controversy over theological matters which so agitated the home churches at that time. For the Philippines it was an imported quarrel, but the cleavage created by it was as deeply wounding as if it had been a domestic product. The house divided against itself was weakened not only for the 1920's but for the long future as well.

The second disaster was the American depression of the 1930's as a result of which Disciple missionaries were recalled and many mission properties were sold. The institutional losses have never been regained in the Manila area. Perhaps it is not even desirable that they should be regained in the same terms, but their loss is keenly felt by the Tagalog churches which now have no institutional means of outreach beyond the local churches themselves. The loss of missionary encouragement and supervision during the years of the depression was deep-going. It had been thought that the Filipino churches were far more self-sufficient than they were. They needed us more than was imagined.

Nevertheless, the Filipino church among Disciples is an indigenous church from its highest national executive down to the pastors and teachers of the local churches. Missionaries are consultants and advisors, not administrators. Church administration is in the hands of the Filipinos themselves. In the Tagalog area what centralization there is heads up in a National Business Convention, which meets

annually, and a Board of Trustees, which meets monthly. The Board of Trustees is elected by the convention and is responsible to it. The Trustees appoint district evangelists, who serve much in the role of state secretaries; ordain ministers; employ a general executive secretary; and keep a watchful eye upon the work of the whole brotherhood. There is a Church Erection Credit Union, a national Christian Youth Fellowship, and a national Christian Women's Fellowship. The resemblances to the Disciples of Christ in the United States are at once apparent.

Let us make it clear that all but the Disciples of the Tagalog area have chosen to join the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. When we look for the reason, we find a very simple answer: The desire of the local churches themselves; the northern brethren wanted to enter the United Church; the Tagalog brethren decided not to join for the present. It is contemplated that they may eventually do so, but whether they do or not will be entirely up to the Filipino Disciples themselves. They have not broken fellowship with their northern brethren; they are no less related to the vital program of the UCMS. They are fully cooperative in the Federation and in other joint enterprises of the Evangelical community. Like the American Baptists, who are also a cooperatively minded people, they have simply chosen not to be a part of the United Church at this time.

The deepest needs of all Protestant churches can be stated in two terms which are interrelated: stewardship and leadership. Ministerial salaries are unbelievably low—from \$15 to \$60 per month. Thus ministers are driven to other part time employment for a livelihood. Thus also ministers who are not fully trained continue in leadership of the churches. These dual difficulties create a kind of vicious circle; until stewardship improves the churches cannot have a full-time, adequately trained leadership; until leadership improves, stewardship cannot be lifted. This is where the missionary is of tremendous value; he can help to lift the level of leadership through pastors' institutes, spiritual retreats and conferences; and he can also help to lift the level of giving by working with local pastors in the development of a sound system of budgeting and every-member canvassing. It is now generally felt that direct subsidies are in the end more crippling than helpful; the missionary learns to help the native church to help itself.

## NEW TOUCHES IN LOCAL CHURCHES

Church life in the main follows the lines of Protestantism in its American forms. A Presbyterian or a Disciple will feel at home almost at once in the order of service, and if it is conducted in English, which it sometimes is, he will recognize most of the hymns as those on which he too has been reared. If the service is in a native dialect, he will still recognize the hymn tunes and the order of worship.

But he will see some differences. There will be some borrowings from the Roman Catholic church which will impress him. Almost no chapel, however humble, will fail to have a divided chancel with a lectern, pulpit and an altar. Sometimes the altar will be used as communion table, sometimes there will be a communion table in addition. There is almost universal use of cross and candlesticks.

Another Roman Catholic borrowing is the ringing of a tiny hand bell by the pastor to signal times for rising and sitting. This is borrowed, of course, from the elevation of the Host during the mass and is applied to an entirely different part of the liturgy—the elevation and lowering of the bodies of the worshippers in the pews! The elevation of the Host is directly imitated in the lifting up of the communion emblems during the prayers of thanksgiving offered by the elders at the table.

There are some few touches that have come from the Philippine culture itself, but very few. One is the introduction of an occasional hymn tune, especially by a choir which may be led by a farseeing leader. These tunes are well received and are sung enthusiastically. One could wish for more of them.

A touch that seems at first to be neither Roman nor Philippine is the use of Coca-Cola for communion wine. This is done in out-of-the-way places. The writer never observed it in Manila, but he drank Coca-Cola from tiny communion glasses at San Pablo, Laguna, on March 21, 1954; and he knows from the report of missionary colleagues that the practice is both regular and general in mountain regions. Coca-Cola is practically universal in the Philippines. Grapes have not been grown in the Islands until very recently, at least not vintage grapes of the kind used in communion wine. In any case, the use of grape juice has been unnatural. So Coca-Cola, as far-fetched as it may at first sound, is actually closer to Filipino daily life than grape juice. Of course, to carry the affin-



ity further, rice should be substituted for communion bread, for bread is not a regular item of the Filipino diet. But, such is consistency, bread is used.

Still another novel practice in local churches is the thank offering made near the close of a morning worship service. It is quite general. At a given time, all those who have something special for which to thank God, come forward, place their centavos in the offering plate which rests on a kind of communion rail, kneel there and say their private prayers before returning to their pews. This takes place in every Sunday morning service. Disciple churches do not always follow the practice of kneeling, but they do use the thank offering.

Blessings for birthdays are also universal. At the close of a morning worship service, those having birthdays that week come forward, make their offering, and receive the minister's blessing. This takes the form of a scripture reading and a prayer especially for them and the laying on of hands while they are kneeling.

#### CHANGING CONDITIONS AND NEW STRATEGIES

It would be a mistake to close this article without some assessment of present missionary trends in the Philippines and in the immediate Oriental vicinity to which the Philippine church is related. No one can make such an assessment dogmatically nor predict strategies accurately—least of all officially. In what follows, the writer speaks for himself alone; if he speaks for others at all, it is only because they may see things in the same light.

Several new facts which have emerged since World War II force a complete re-examination of the role of the Christian church in the Philippines. Some of these facts may be listed as follows:

1. The closing of China to the Christian mission.
2. The rise of Asian nationalism, together with distrust toward the white man in Indonesia, India, and other parts of the Asian mainland.
3. The amazing friendliness of the Philippines to Americans. This is truer since national independence than before. American missionaries are loved here; and the door to them stands wide open still.
4. The strategic location of the Philippines in the heart of what Adlai Stevenson has called the "third world," the great uncom-

mitted world of 1,000,000 people who are neither solidly for or against Russia or America.

5. The emerging political leadership of the Philippine Republic in the Southeast Asia Defense Community. As these words are written the foreign ministers of eight states are meeting at Baguio in the Philippines to shape SAETO. The Philippines is beginning truly to operate as the show window of democracy in the Orient.

6. The launching of the first foreign missionary work from the Philippines to other Asian countries. The UCCP now has missionaries in Thailand and Indonesia. The Methodists have sent a missionary to Okinawa. The opportunity of Asians to evangelize Asians may just be opening when the door against Occidentals is beginning to close.

The movement of Asian nationalism has been slower in coming to the Philippines than to the other parts of Asia, but there are also signs that it is coming here as well. In the beginning of the Magsaysay administration, for example, a spokesman for the new party in power revived the slogan "Asia for Asians." Magsaysay himself was opposed to it and he finally squelched it; but there are extremists who may be heard more and more gladly, and the beginnings of a more ardent Philippine nationalism may not be very far in the future. Magsaysay himself is advocating a "healthy nationalism," which he had interpreted in terms of a developing domestic welfare of the Philippines, living as good neighbors in a community of nations. His interpretation is very reassuring, as is his own spirit in advocating it. But there are others who may swing this development in the wrong direction before too many years. All of this adds up to the fact that in the eyes of this observer, at least, we have an unprecedented opportunity in the Philippines, and through the Philippines in the whole of Asia right now, but that this opportunity may not long remain as open as it is, and it may be increasingly denied to us.

The above reflections call forth an urgency which many Americans are not inclined to feel. The reason lies in the fact that it is easy for Americans to view the Philippines superficially. To the superficial eye, Manila looks so much like America that American visitors do not fully realize how different it truly is. The English language, American automobiles, and American movies and advertising are all very misleading. The American veneer in the Philip-

pires is overlaid upon an Oriental heart which at the same time is not Oriental in the usual sense of the term. Moreover, in the sections of Manila not naturally reached by the tourist and in outlying provinces, it becomes at once apparent that the Philippines is an almost primitive rural economy and that it lives as it were just at the edge of the jungle of primitism in religion as in economics.

Americans have also taken too much at its face value the fact that the Philippines is nominally a Christian nation, due to the fifteen million people who are Roman Catholics. American Protestants feel complacent over these Roman Catholic statistics because they have nothing but American Roman Catholicism as a standard by which to judge Philippine Roman Catholicism. This is a mistake. Philippine Roman Catholicism is basically Spanish. To understand it, one must think in terms of the Roman Church in Spain, in Mexico, and in South America. The Protestant movement, small as it is, has done much to purge the Roman church in the Philippines but there are many residual elements of the old Spanish corruption still remaining. Among these are feudal landlordism, indifference to the economic needs of the common people, the licensing of lotteries, sweepstakes, cock-fights and other forms of gambling, the impoverishing fiesta system, the power-hungry rule of priests and friars, the use of violence and intimidation to continue this power. Stonings and job sabotage and refusal are used to keep communicants in line and to punish apostates. Exorbitant fees are charged for masses and christenings. Folk superstitions are encouraged and exploited. In short, Philippine Roman Catholicism remains in great part a political machine dispensing an otherworldly sacramentalism rather than an ethical gospel of good news to the poor.

Positively, the Roman Catholic Church has done much in the Philippines. Its coming saved the Islands from further Moslem expansion. It has lifted Filipino womanhood; no Oriental women begin to enjoy the status of women in the Philippines where they are man's equal. It has introduced the ethic of Jesus as the moral norm of the archipelago, even when the standard is honored only in the breach. In more recent times, it has become exceedingly busy in education and in medicine, largely on a basis of competition with Protestant activities in these fields. But whatever the reasons, the people are served. Nevertheless, the dynamic for the lifting of

the common people owes more to Protestantism than to Roman Catholicism; and it is one of the functions of Protestantism, not to proselyte every Roman Catholic, but to keep on challenging the Roman church with the neglected aspects of its task, and to keep on shaming it into reform of its corruptions. To do these things, the Protestant movement need not become a majority, but it must grow into a considerably strengthened minority.

All of these elements add up to the fact that the Philippine Islands is one of the foremost missionary opportunities in the world today. The Filipino may be the key to the Christianization of all southeast Asia. But it is also apparent that none of this evangelization can be the work of paternalistic missions; it must be the product of a great fraternity of Christian enterprise in which Orient and Occident share as yoke-fellows. This involves cooperative planning as well as cooperative serving.

The indigenous church must grow in strength and in self-confidence. More able Filipinos must be trained for full-time leadership in the national church. Stewardship must be lifted, along with the whole level of economic life in the nation. The most promising young men must have the advantage of American and European experience and education. For example, many of them should be sent as missionaries to other lands. There is no reason why the United Christian Missionary Society should not accept as candidate for missionary service in India or Cuba or Japan a young Christian Filipino who may be as well qualified for this service as any American Christian. The Presbyterian secretary of Oriental missions, with headquarters in New York, is a Filipino. Why not? It was the writer's privilege recently to visit with David Lao, a young Chinese national educated in America who is going as UCMS missionary to Thailand. These are signs of a new day that is dawning.

Since in the Philippines we have our best and our most unobstructed opportunity to develop Oriental Christian leadership of, by, and for Orientals, let us move now to do all we can to:

1. Increase our missionary staff up to the measure of its fullest opportunity.
2. Encourage the maturing of the indigenous church in the Philippines.
3. Enlist Filipinos as yoke-fellows on both sides of the Pacific

and in all the available positions of brotherhood life for which their talents fit them.

4. Help prepare them for their unique Christian service to their own brethren, as Filipino missionaries to the Filipino people.

5. Include them among our candidates for service in other lands, especially in southeast Asia.

6. Give moral support to the new and growing foreign missionary enterprise of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines as it reaches out to its neighbors across the China Sea.

President Benjamin I. Guansing of Union Theological Seminary, a number of years ago while a local pastor, offered a prayer breathing the spirit which lives today in the Philippines and which is the hope of a new day not only for his own archipelago, but for the whole of the Orient. He prayed:

Eternal God, we acknowledge thee as the Great Benefactor of our seven thousand far-flung Isles. . . . Accept our gratitude for inspiring the love which through sacrificial gifts on the part of many of thy Western Children made possible the coming of missionaries to our shores. . . . Help us to go forth beyond our shores, making known Christ, the real dynamic of a new day in the East. Small as we are, imbue us with thy living Spirit that our country may be an effective leavening force in transforming humanity in Asia<sup>59</sup>

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59. Mathews, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

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